

Obedience Ring Etiquette

It is the competitors responsibility to watch their ring and to be at ringside when it is their turn. If in multiple rings you must make yourself available for the ring that calls you first not the ring you want to do first.

Always enter the ring with your dog on lead, this lead should be a *minimum of 750mm*, whether you are completing on lead work or going to work off lead. Dogs must be on a fixed or slip collar that fits correctly (loosely), they must not be on a harness or head halter.¹

There mustn't be anything attached to the lead ie poo bag holders. Food and toys cannot be taken into a trial ring.² Any loose change, car keys or anything else that may jingle or make noise must be removed from your pockets before entering the ring – these can be perceived as training aids – competitors have been disqualified for these breaches.

If you use food or toys as a reward on leaving the ring, they must be left at least five metres from all rings.³

Wait to be invited into the ring by the steward, you will then take up your position near the start peg. Which side of the peg is entirely up to you and the comfort of your dog.

Wear your exhibitor number where it can be clearly seen only one should be visible.⁴ If you have a bitch she must have been vetted and your number stamped "*Pass To Ring*".

Once the judge has asked if you are ready and you have said you are the exercise has begun.

If you are in any class that has optional exercises it is your responsibility to attend the ring before the commencement of the class to inform the steward of the option you will be doing.⁵

The steward should also be informed if you are in multiple classes before the start of the class.. In this way you are less likely to be called absent. The steward will then be able to mark their sheets.

On entering the ring you come under the judges' control, you cannot correct your dog in the ring. You cannot touch the collar of the dog or restrain the dog by the collar between exercises – doing so can be deemed to be misbehaviour and/or physical guidance and points can be deducted by the judge.

If you are using a dumbbell, it must be taken into the ring with you and handed over to the steward when instructed by the judge.

The judge is to be respected – you may not agree with the decision on your performance but you must not impugn his/her decision, if you have a query take it up with the judge, preferably as you leave the ring, not ten dogs later, Do not argue with the judge, if you feel there has been an injustice take it up as soon as you can with the judge, in a manner that is not abrasive/abusive.⁶

The judges' orders are to be followed,

- If the exercise or class level is off lead you must wait for the judges' request to remove your lead, do not anticipate.
- If you have been given an order by the judge to down/stand or halt and the dog has not complied you should not give a second command to the dog but wait for instruction from the judge. Giving a second command can result in a point deduction for the missed behaviour, plus a deduction for not waiting for judges orders.⁷
- Dogs cannot be physically placed into down/sit in the group exercises, once again then collar cannot be touched between these exercises.

If you don't wish to continue the individual exercise you can ask the judge if you can withdraw, once you have withdrawn you can no longer compete in that class. If you don't wish to participate in the group exercise you must inform the judge or steward before the group exercises begin. It is not appropriate to just not turn up, as the class may be waiting for you.⁸ There must be three dogs in the group exercises so the judge may not approve your withdrawal.

You can not ask to be moved in the group exercises, you must go in catalogue order.⁹

If you wish your dog to wear protective clothing it is up to the judges' discretion – therefore ask the judge before entering the ring, whether before the individual or group exercises.¹⁰

Thank the judge and steward on leaving the ring.

Please never tell the judge you haven't read the rulebook – it is your responsibility to know the rules before entering a competition.

Be respectful of other competitors, it is wonderful when you get a long awaited pass or title but to have the 'party' outside the rings or in the ring can disrupt other dogs that are still working.

Do not enter an empty ring to 'train' while the trial is still running unless you have approval from a club Official.¹¹

When 'training' or playing, have consideration for the dogs that are working in the rings.

Other Stuff that might be worth a mention ☺

If using a dog's name at the beginning of an exercise¹², or before calling the dog on the recall (description of exercises) there must be a *distinct* pause before giving the next command.¹³

When giving a command and/or signal to the dog the signal must be a "*single movement of arms and/or hands only*" – the body should not be bending (there are exceptions in Open, Utility and Utility Excellent – these are outlined in the description of the exercise). Signals should not be held in a position – if the signal is prolonged then it can be judged as being an extended signal and the Judge can penalise accordingly.¹⁴

After giving a signal the hand must be returned to their original position.¹⁵

Don't bend your head to look at your dog when it comes in on a recall, don't look at your dog to check that it has sat when you halt. These are hard things not to do but they could be seen as second signals.

Reference Points

1. ANKC Rule Book pge 16
2. ANKC Rule Book pge 11
3. ANKC Rule Book pge 11
4. ANKC Rule Book pge 8
5. Note, some online entry systems now record the optional choices, but some don't, some don't do all the options – it is still the competitors responsibility to check that the options are correct at ringside.
6. ANKC Rule Book pge 8 s5(c)
7. ANKC Rule Book pge 10 s8
8. ANKC Rule Book pge 9 s7
9. ANKC Rule Book pge 11
10. ANKC Rule Book pge 8
11. ANKC Rule Book pge 8 s7
12. ANKC Rule Book pge 10
13. ANKC Rule Book pge 9
14. ANKC Rule Book pge 9 s8
15. ANKC Rule Book pge 9 s8